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Indonesia-Malaysia: An Anxious Eye on the Muslims (C)

Events in Iran have aroused concern in the Governments of Indonesia and Malaysia over the possibility of agitation from their own Muslim populations. (U)

The at least nominal adherence to Islam of 90 percent of Indonesia's 140 million people makes it the world's largest Muslim community. Although President Suharto and most of his cohorts are Muslim in faith, Muslim leaders have long complained that only lip-service is given by the government to Muslim interests. Muslims have been in the forefront of Indonesians who object to the country's pro-Western orientation, a stance the government considers imperative if it is to acquire the foreign funds essential for Indonesia's economic development. (U)

Under the military-dominated government, Muslim political activities have been as circumscribed as those of any other group, and according to state policy Islam is given equal recognition with other major religions. The Muslim profession of most Indonesians does result in some catering to them. For example, missionary work--mainly Christian--has been forbidden among people who already profess a religion, and all foreign assistance for religious activities must be approved by a government committee. (C)

Even before the recent changes in Iran, there had been a "back to the mosque" movement in Indonesia. Its more extreme manifestations have been in urban areas among youths and intellectuals who apparently feel guilt over their material possessions and secular lifestyles. The Islamic revival in rural areas has largely been moderate, and its leaders profess to see the benefits of modernization. (C)

The triumph of the Khomeini forces in Iran has increased sentiment in Indonesia for creation of an Islamic state. The government has been disturbed by the

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appearance of large numbers of portraits of the Iranian religious leader in West Java. The chairman of the national council of Muslim leaders has been cheered by students with cries of "Be our Khomeini." (S NF NC)

Indonesian Muslim leaders have--out of fear of government countermeasures--refrained from public expressions of satisfaction over Khomeini's success. None has indicated plans to undertake similar agitation in Indonesia, but the government has nevertheless taken measures to monitor antigovernment sermons by planting agents in the mosques. (S NF NC)

Muslim leaders are divided over the implications for Indonesia of the developments in Iran. Some see parallels with the claimed oppression of Indonesian Muslims. These leaders discount the differences between Iran's Shiites and Indonesia's Sunnis, saying events in Iran symbolize a reuniting of Muslims worldwide regardless of sectarian allegiance. Others, however, see the basic differences between the Shiites and Sunnis as militating against any similar upsurge in Indonesia. (S NF NC)

The Sunnis in Indonesia lack the organizational structure that produced the leadership in Iran. Their many divisions seem to be a hedge against coordinated and concerted antigovernment agitation. The Indonesian Government is probably correct in assessing that the number of Muslim extremists is small and that there is no early prospect of an Indonesian Muslim leader with a following comparable to that of Khomeini. Even so, most government officials recognize that it is prudent not to underestimate the popular appeal of the creation of an Islamic state. (S NF NC OC)

In Malaysia, there has been no reported adulation of Khomeini, even though Malaysian Muslims--generally considered more orthodox in the practice of Islam than the Indonesians--might be expected to react. (U)

Unlike their Indonesian brethren, Malaysian Muslims do not feel oppressed. Government programs are focused on the economic and educational betterment of ethnic Malays--44 percent of the population and almost all Muslim--against the economically dominant Chinese, who

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comprise 36 percent of the population. Also, Islam is the state religion in Malaysia, not just one among equals as is the case in Indonesia. (U)

Despite the absence of Iran-inspired agitation, the government is keeping a watchful eye on the fundamentalist dakwah (missionary) movement, active in Malaysia for several years and apparently growing. The government looks with favor on the movement's efforts to revitalize the practice of Islam in Malaysia. A worrisome aspect, however, is the rejection by some extremist groups of the Western values and methods that Kuala Lumpur considers essential to the success of its modernization program. It fears extremists may be encouraged by the Iranian example. (U)

Also worrisome is the extremists' intolerance of "infidels," an attitude that disturbs Malaysia's uneasy racial mix of Malays, Chinese, and Indians. An example of the type of incidents the government fears could set off communal strife was the desecration of Hindu temples last summer by members of an extremist Muslim group. (U)

The government is also disturbed over the involvement of young and educated Malays in the fundamentalist movement. About 80 percent of Malays in the universities are believed to be associated with dakwah groups. In embracing a more traditional form of Islam, young people are shunning Western-style clothes and ideas. This phenomenon is seen even among students recently returned from studies in Western countries and appears to be a delayed rejection of Western permissiveness. The government is concerned that the attraction to more traditional ways not spill over into a rejection of the study of modern science and technology that would impede Malaysia's economic development. (C)

The government's plan to double the size of its military forces over the next three years--although aimed mainly at containing Communist insurgency--is also intended to bolster the government's ability to cope with Muslim extremism. The government's shelving of plans to purchase 60 US-produced aircraft now in Israeli hands is a measure of the degree to which it feels bound to cater to Muslim sentiment. It concluded that the

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probable revelation of the "taint" of previous Israeli ownership could cause additional problems with revived Islamic fundamentalism. (S NF NC OC)

The government of Prime Minister Hussein, dominated by his United Malays National Organization, must strike a balance between support for Islam and espousal of a multiracial society. It wants to hold the allegiance of Malay voters against the appeal of an opposition Muslim fundamentalist party without adding to resentment among the Chinese over preferential treatment for Malays in business and education. An increase in Muslim extremism would compound the government's difficulties in maintaining this balancing act. (U) (SECRET NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON)

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North Korea: Chronology (U)

19 January

At the request of North Korea, the secretaries of the Military Armistice Commission hold their 456th meeting. In routine fashion, North Korea charges the UN Command with numerous minor violations of the armistice agreement. The 455th meeting of the MAC secretaries was held in September 1978, also at the request of North Korea.

21 January

Kim Il-song, for the second time in eight months, inspects progress in the development of the west coast port of Nampo.

23 January

North Korea, ostensibly responding to South Korean President Pak's appeal on 19 January for a resumption of North-South talks, puts forward a four-point proposal calling for the convening in September of a "pan-national congress" composed of representatives of all political parties and social groups. The proposal, made by the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland (DFRF), calls for a preliminary meeting in Pyongyang in June to plan the congress.

27 January

The DFRF, responding to South Korea's proposal to begin talks before June, proposes that working-level representatives meet in early April.

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31 January North Korea, in a statement by its official news agency, KCNA, announces its intent to implement unilaterally the first two steps of the four-point proposal of 23 January. Pyongyang reaffirms its adherence to the principles of the 4 July 1972 joint statement and asserts that it will stop all polemics against South Korea on 1 February.

2 February North Korean media refer for the first time to the First and Third Machine Building Industry Ministries.

5 February The DFRF calls for the formation of a "Preparatory Committee of National Unification" to replace the North-South Coordination Committee (NSCC), which Pyongyang argues is no longer a suitable mechanism for reunification talks. Pyongyang proposes a meeting of "liaison representatives" of the North and South in Panmunjom on 20 February to set up the preparatory committee.

13 February The DFRF, responding to Seoul's offer to have contacts by NSCC representatives in Panmunjom on 17 February, says it will send "liaison representatives" to the meeting. On 12 February, Pyongyang had released the names of four liaison representatives, headed by Kwon Min-chun, the former chief North Korean observer at the UN.

17 February Representatives from the North and South meet for 80 minutes at Panmunjom amid heavy media coverage by both sides. Seoul seeks a reactivation of the NSCC machinery; Pyongyang pushes for its broader based preparatory committee. The two sides agree to have a second "contact" on 7 March.

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18 February The press in Cairo reports that Egypt has sent North Korea a "protest memorandum" concerning the presence of North Korean pilots in Libya.

20 February Kim Il-song, in his first publicly reported activity since 22 January, visits a petrochemical complex under construction near Anju and convenes a conference of chemical industry specialists.

North Korea proposes that the North and South form a "unified team" for the 35th world ping-pong championships scheduled to be held in Pyongyang in late April. To this end, Pyongyang calls for a meeting of sports officials from the two sides at Panmunjom on 27 February.

Chinese Ambassador Liu Zhixian (Liu Chih-hsien) returns to Pyongyang after an absence of almost three months.

23 February Korea, in an authoritative "commentator's article" in the party daily, protests the joint US - South Korean military exercise "Team Spirit-79" scheduled for 1-17 March. It says the exercise casts a "dark cloud" over the recently resumed North-South political contacts.

27 February Representatives of the ping-pong associations of the North and South meet at Panmunjom to discuss the formation of a joint team for the world tournament in April. The North proposes that the team participate under the official title "Koryo." The two sides agree to continue discussions at Panmunjom on 5 March.

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28 February In a Defense Ministry spokesman's state the Team Spirit-79 military exercise it is compelled to "hold in abeyance" measures to implement the third step of its four-point proposal of 23 January. That step called for both sides to stop all threatening military activities effective 1 March.

2 March In a statement by the DFRF, North Korea criticizes South Korea's failure to halt its polemics and stop threatening military activities.

4 March A South Korean Army private assigned to the 7th Division defects to North Korea by crossing the Demilitarized Zone during the early morning hours. It is the first South Korean military defection since an Army major crossed the DMZ in June 1978.

5 March Sports officials from the North and South continue discussions in Panmunjom on the formation of a single ping-pong team. Seoul seeks a guarantee that the South's team will be permitted to participate in the world championship matches in Pyongyang if efforts to form a combined team fail. The two sides agree to meet again on 9 March.

7 March North and South political representatives meet for a second "contact" at Panmunjom. The North defends its position on the need to set up a new organization to prepare for full-fledged talks; the South continues to question the authority of the DFRF. Both sides agree to have another "contact" on 14 March.

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